

another cutting edge;

a back-up roll spaced from said cutting roll so as to form a nip, said back up roll being mounted relative to said cutting roll such that at least one of said cutting edges cooperates with said back-up roll to cut hydrous polymer gel; and

a conveying device driven separately from said cutting roll to convey a layer of hydrous polymer gel to the nip at a speed less than the rotational speed of said cutting roll.

27. The device of claim 26, wherein the surface of the back-up roll has depressions which can receive the cutting edges of at least one of said cutting roll and said back-up roll. -- *for receiving the cutting edges*

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested.

Claims 16, 20, and 23-25 have been cancelled. New Claim 26 is based upon the subject matter of Claim 16, and new Claim 27 is based upon the subject matter of cancelled Claim 23. Claims 17-19, 21, 22 and 26-27 are active in the application.

Applicants wish to thank Examiner Dexter for the courtesy of a further interview on November 24, 1998. At that time, possible new claims were discussed, including a new Claim 27 which corresponds to Claim 26 of the present response. This claim recites in part a conveying device driven separately from the cutting roll to convey a layer of hydrous polymer gel to the nip at a speed less than the rotational speed of the cutting roll. Basis for this is found in the last three lines of page 4 in the specification, which described at the rotational speed of the longitudinal cutter is higher than the conveying rate of the polymer gel. The separate drive of the conveying device is inherent from this description, and this avoids congestion (see also page 10, lines 13-23). In contrast, the conveyor in Heywood is driven by the roller C, which is in turn driven by the roller F. Thus, the subject matter of

Claim 27 is not taught in Heywood, and at the conclusion of the interview the Examiner indicated that this appears "to define over Heywood since it appears that the conveyor of Heywood is driven by the rollers and thus would move at substantially the same speed." The rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102 and 35 U.S.C. §103 based on Heywood are therefore believed to be moot.

Concerning the rejection of Claims 21-23 as being obvious over Heywood in view of Stream, it is noted that Stream was cited for the limited teaching of coating the backup roll with plastic. Accordingly, it could provide no teaching for overcoming shortcomings of Heywood.

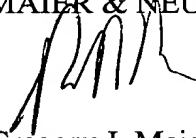
Concerning the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, it is noted that the objections to Claims 16, 20 and 23-25 have been rendered moot in light of the cancellation of these claims. The objections to Claims 18 and 19 had already been addressed in the Preliminary Amendment filed on September 23, 1998.

Since the claims no longer recite the "adjustable nip," it is not believed to be necessary to illustrate this feature in the drawings.

Applicants therefore believe that the present application is in a condition for allowance and respectfully solicit an early Notice of Allowability.

Respectfully submitted,

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